

Biscotti Natale (Christmas Cookies)

The term biscotti literally means “twice-cooked,” but here these once-cooked biscotti are more like a cookie than their Italian name would suggest.



- 2 cups almonds, blanched, skins removed & toasted**
- 2 cups hazelnuts, toasted & skins removed**
- 10 1/2 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped into small pieces**
- 10 1/2 tablespoons unsalted butter**
- 10 1/2 tablespoons lard (shortening may be substituted)**
- 4 eggs**
- 3/4 cup amaretto liqueur**
- 1 teaspoon vanilla**
- 4 1/3 cups sugar**
- 2 teaspoons baking powder**
- 5 3/4 - 6 cups all purpose flour**

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Roughly chop the skinless, toasted almonds and hazelnuts. Set aside.

Place the chopped chocolate into a medium bowl. Melt the butter and lard together in a small pan over medium heat. Pour the warm, melted butter mixture over the chocolate and stir until the chocolate is melted and well combined with the butter mixture. Set aside to cool.

In a small bowl, combine the eggs, amaretto and vanilla, beating until well combined. Set aside.

In a large bowl, combine the sugar and baking powder. Add the egg mixture, stirring until well combined. Next, add the chocolate mixture, stirring until well combined. Stir in the chopped nuts, distributing evenly throughout.

Add the flour in 2-cup batches, stirring until well combined between each addition, reserving the final 1/4 cup of flour. The dough should be moist but able to retain a shape when formed. If it is too soft, add the final 1/4 cup of flour.

Place a quarter of the dough on a clean hard surface and, using your hands, form into a 1/2-inch-thick slab of dough. Using a 2-inch round cookie cutter cut out the biscotti. Reshape the scraps into another 1/2-inch-thick slab and cut additional biscotti until all the dough is used.

Place the biscotti on a parchment-lined baking sheet and bake for 16 to 18 minutes, or until the biscotti are slightly hard on the outside yet still retain their shape and are soft on the inside. Cool on a wire rack.

Makes 6 1/2 dozen cookie-shaped “biscotti.”